

April 2008  
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# W CROSS R D

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## FROM THE PASTOR

At a recent clergy gathering, a conversation began on the topic of Jesus' resurrection. Believe it or not, not all people, including clergy, agree on every aspect of our Christian faith. One pastor spoke against the literal understanding and teaching of the Bible, raising his personal understanding that Jesus' resurrection was not literal but a "personal belief deep in the human heart that Jesus rose again." Others strongly disagreed. They believed that Jesus' resurrection was indeed "a firmly rooted life event." In the end, we all agreed to disagree. What a compromise! What the amazing learning event for me was that our relationship was more important to let our differences divide our unity. This was a true example of democracy and faith in action. In this world we live in, there are struggles that depress our spirits where people and cultures cannot reach this compromise between faith and government. Many cannot reconcile the two. Yet there are so many examples of this type of compromise that we should be lifted in spirit. Mahatma Gandhi's friendship with British opponents in the non-violent campaign for Indian independence shouts out to us to learn. Differences don't have to divide us. In fact, differences can strengthen our relationships and sharpen our perspectives. This doesn't happen automatically. Differences more often divide us, pulling us farther apart rather than drawing us closer together. What makes the difference? What do we need to learn to grow when we don't agree?

The First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ

FIRST- Learn to value the concept of respect. All are created in the image of God. When we listen to others before forming our response we value the other rather than dismissing them. We all want and need to be valued. Second - We are all not the same! Henri Nouwen in "The Road to Peace" suggests *"The real violence starts in the way we speak about people, make assumptions about them, and decide that they are not like us."*

Third - remember we are all defective. The way we see the world is skewed. Paul says that "we see through a glass darkly." Not only in our faith but also in our emotions decision making. None of us can see the picture perfectly. None of us interpret the Holy Scriptures perfectly, therefore how can any of us think that ours is the final word?

Everything is not "one way or the other." This way of thinking allows us to hold on to our belief, but to do so with an open mind. In seminary we read of the teachings of Martin Buber, a 20<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher who wrote on community. Buber called this way of thinking the "narrow ridge." Buber believed that people could hold strong convictions while at the same time opening themselves to opposing ideas. He invited people to deep listening and open hearts rather than hardened opinions.

As we learn to respect one another as people, we learn to avoid assumptions about what one another said, and we learn how to hold our conflicting views with humility and to open our hearts to hear what was said. Friendships can be deepened through disagreements.

Doesn't that just turn the world on its head!  
Just like Jesus!

**RB**

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## FIRST FOLKS

Get well wishes go to Susan Leonard, who recently broke her leg and is undergoing therapy at Northeast Rehab.

**John Skribiski** started his chemotherapy treatment on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please keep John and his family in your prayers.

We send our condolence to **Joyce and Bill McDevitt** and their family on the death of their son, **Greg**. A memorial service was held in the sanctuary on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the baptisms of **Ella Jean Czarnecki**, daughter of **Cindy (Pultar) & Gregg Czarnecki**, and **Ashton Cooper Macintyre**, son on **Susan & Kevin Macintyre**. We send our congratulations and best wishes to both families.

Get well wishes go to **Kenny Andrews** who underwent surgery at Children's Hospital in Boston on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Kenny is now back home recuperating.

**Fred Coleman** died March 11<sup>th</sup> in Florida following a stroke. We send our condolences to the Coleman Family. If you would like to send Kathy a note, her address is:

8720 Alegre Circle  
Orlando, FL 32836

**Tom Wood's** mother, **Dorothy**, died March 16<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Bill officiated at her funeral service at the Goundry funeral Home in Salem on March 20<sup>th</sup>. We send our condolences to Tom and his family.

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## **HILLSBOROUGH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING**

The First Congregational Church of Pelham has been asked and we have **April 2008**

## **FAMILY FELLOWSHIP NOTES**

The ways in which a congregation celebrates together and "plays" together demonstrates the strength of our church. On that note, the March Spaghetti Dinner and Fun-cert was a tremendous family

agreed to host the Hillsborough Association of the New Hampshire Conference's Annual Meeting on Sunday May 4, 2008 at 2:00 PM.

In the United Church of Christ, each congregation or local church is free to act in accordance with the collective decision of its members, guided by the working of the Spirit. But it also is called to live in a covenantal relationship with other congregations for the sharing of insights and for cooperative action under the authority of Christ. Thus we belong to an association of local churches. We all are constrained by love to live in a covenantal relationship with one another and with the local churches in order to make evident the unity of the body of Christ and therefore carry out God's mission in the world more effectively.

The Annual meeting will conduct business of the Association as well as offer a program to allow us to share our joys and experiences with other churches. It promises to be an exciting opportunity for fellowship. You are welcome to attend! If you would like to donate refreshments, please contact the church office (603 635-7025).

## **NEW MEMBERS**

We will welcome new members to our Congregation on Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> during the morning service of worship. If you would like more information or are interested in joining, please speak to Rev. Bill or call the church office (603 635-7025).

fellowship event! Over 130 people attended and all were very pleased with the dinner and the entertainment! Our Youth Fellowship Members (30 in all) served the wonderful Italian meal compete with disguises and "authentic" accents with great enthusiasm and style. Chef Wally and crew provided pasta, salad,

garlic bread, meatballs and dessert that left all with satisfied appetites. Following dinner, we were all entertained by such a great diversity in talent from all generations of our church family. Singing, Acting, Poems, music and comedy (some accidental) left all smiling and laughing and even singing along! We thank Ken and Wendy Henderson for coordinating the "Fun-cert" acts and the adult volunteers in the kitchen to help supervise our young people; Wally and Jeff Cibulski, Joe and Deb Calabro, Nancy Webster, Maureen Ferguson and RB.

The best sign of a successful All Church Fellowship event are the comments shared when the night is over. Let me share a few with you:

*"I didn't want to come tonight, and then I didn't want to leave! This kind of fellowship is what I want in a church and for my children"*

*"This was a church-altering event"*

*"I didn't know whether to laugh or cry with all the blessings God gave me tonight."*

*"I want to look into joining this church!"*

Please watch for future Family Fellowship events and join the excitement!

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## **BARNABUS CORNER**

Barnabus was a disciple who traveled the countryside doing anonymous good deeds when the need arose. In this spirit, we honor those who have seen a need and used their gifts to perform good deeds

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## **YOUTH GROUP NEWS**

Hard to believe we are coming to the end of our Youth Group year. We have been a very busy and active group this year and welcome participation of all our Church and community youth in our Jr. and Sr. High Programs. Some of the events that are up-coming include:

**Dave Webster, Donn and Josh Clarke, Andrew Ferguson, Connor Patterson, Emily Long, Dan Murphy, Tom Seniow, Tom Wood, Ron Schneider, Joe Calabro, and Tyler Racca** for helping to insulate the attic  
**Tyler Racca and Justin Hollinger** for helping Margaret Greff pack a moving truck.

**The Harris Family** for allowing our church to celebrate Easter Sunrise on the shores of the pond by their Inn.

Our Easter Breakfast volunteers

## **THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

This past month we have received "thank you's" from many of the agencies we support through our mission giving. They include:

***Pelham Good Neighbor Fund*** (\$535)

***Lazarus House*** (\$536)

***Andover Newton Theological School*** (\$105)

***UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns*** (\$103)

If you would like to read these notes in their entirety, they are posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall.

**APRIL 13 - SPRING THING CLOTHING DRIVE** — we invite you to donate good clothing to our Clothing Drive as we start to take out our spring things and realize they don't fit anymore! Our Youth Groups will be sorting and delivering the clothes to area shelters.

**30 HOUR FAMINE** April 26-27. Our Youth Groups will participate in a "FAST THAT LASTS," gathering donations to help with world hunger by pledging not to eat for 30

hours during a lock-in at the church. During the 30 hours, the youth will perform community service, participate in educational-learning events and share times of fellowship. Following the 30 Hours, a "Break-Fast" will be observed.

**FAMILY FELLOWSHIP EVENT MAY 9<sup>th</sup> –  
– DRIVE IN MOVIE** on the church Lawn.

And so much more! Please check out the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for all of our Youth events.

**COMING IN MAY —  
CONFIRMATION SUNDAY MAY 11<sup>th</sup>.**

**MISSION TRIP NEWS**

The date for our Sr. High Mission Trip to Heifer International Farm has been changed to AUGUST 12 -16, 2008. Our Youth will be working with Heifer International Staff, learning how to care for the animals that Heifer provides around the

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world as well as what we can do to help others around the world learn about hunger relief and sustainable industries. All 9<sup>th</sup> — 12<sup>th</sup> Graders who have met eligibility requirements for attendance are welcome to come along. Limit is 14 youth. Get your registrations in ASAP!

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Horton Center Church Camp**

Horton Center offers several different weeks for all age levels and different weekly activities. Archery and Canoeing are just a few of the activities that children can attend. There are several ways to go about receiving financial assistance if families need help paying for their child's camp tuition.

For more information regarding Horton Center please check out the Horton Center Website at [www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org).

Cheryl Andrews is our camp coordinator this year, and our CE superintendent Cathy Miller will be assisting Cheryl. Please feel free to contact Cheryl or Cathy with any summer camp questions.

Speaking of Summer; we're planning to have a Vacation Bible School again this summer! Cathy Miller will be leading the group, along with Rev. Bill, with plans to meet for half days during one week in August. If anyone is interested in making music / crafts with the kids, and can help Cathy and Bill, please let any CE member know.

We're also looking to have an informal gathering for the kids once per month through the summer. We could use some parent volunteers to help out in the fun! Please let us know.

**April 2008**

After more than 6 years of service, Susan Lamport will be stepping down at the end of the school year as our Nursery Room care provider. We can't thank Sue enough for the great work she has done caring for our children.

If anyone is interested in working in the Nursery for next year, please see any CE member.

Check out our CE Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall: April will be presented by our Confirmation Class

Communion Sunday: Kids! Please bring an item to be donated to the Food Pantry on communion Sundays down to your classroom. The teachers will be collecting donations to add to the shopping cart!!

Schedule for April:

**April: 6<sup>th</sup>:** Communion Sunday: kids/parents – bring a contribution for the Food Pantry!

**April 13<sup>th</sup>:** Teaching Sunday: Youth group clothing drive

April 20<sup>th</sup>: Teaching Sunday

April 27<sup>th</sup>: NH School Vacation week —  
Gathering for K-4<sup>th</sup> graders

Sincerely,

**Karen Dorman** for the CE committee

## STEEPLETOPICS

Steepletop was really excited by their visit from Freckles the Leprechaun. He turned the classrooms upside down and dodged a leprechaun trap. The Kindergartners loved their field trip to see "Seusicle" and are enjoying everything that they are learning about the Rain Forest. The preschool classes have just returned from outer space and now are down on Earth, exploring spring and growing. Please

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remember Steepletop will be closed April 28-May 2<sup>nd</sup> for spring vacation.

Steepletop has been offering a computer class for kids run by Imagine Tomorrow. If you are interested in signing your child up please contact Imagine Tomorrow at (603)898-3300.

We are continuing to accept registrations for the 2008-2009 school year. If you have a child who will be aged 3-5 by September 30<sup>th</sup> and are interested in enrollment for the fall, please call the school at (603)635-2100 and leave a message for the Registrar.

Submitted by,

**Melanie Surprenant**

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Info in last month's CROSSWORD about the brown bag program never happened. We were snowed out! So at the March meeting we combined our planned Sing-Along with the brown bags. We had such a good time! Singing and visiting, and eating desert - what could be better!

**Our April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting** will be a group discussion of "The Purpose Driven Life." Please come and join in - such an

interesting topic. We're meeting in the church parlor.

**May 27<sup>th</sup>** - "How to get unstuck from our To-Do lists and do the things we dream of doing someday." We'll figure it out together.

**BAKE SALE - Sunday April 20<sup>th</sup>**. Come prepared for yummy goodies prepared by

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our

own ladies. Money raised goes to our church building fund and mission projects.

**SPRING FORUM** - Mark your calendars for the NH UCC Women Spring Forum on Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This year it will be held at The First Congregational Church in Wakefield. There are two exciting speakers. Angela Jones from Franconia will be talking about "Where is Jesus in Those we Encounter." Angela is the creator of the *Jesus Doll Ministry*. Our second speaker will be Beth Bascom who works for the Bethany Christian Services. Her talk will be on "Supporting Foster Families Faithfully One by One."

The Spring Forum begins at 9:30 AM and will conclude about 3:00 PM. Registration fee is \$8.00 and includes lunch.

Registration fees may be sent to Dot Pitman, 12 Maple Knoll Drive, Hollis, NH 03049. Be sure to include your name, address and church when you register.

Please register by April 8<sup>th</sup>. Pelham women will car pool from the church. Please see Alma Healey to reserve your spot.

**Cheryl Koch**

## "LEVI" SUNDAY

### ALL CHURCH VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

### SUNDAY APRIL 27<sup>th</sup> 11:30 AM

It is the time of year for Spring Cleaning and the church needs your attention. Wear your work clothes to church, bring brooms and rakes and join us as we celebrate our own "Levi Sunday."

Most of you may think Levi's are a popular pair of Jeans. But the Levites had a very responsible and respected position as a tribe in Israel.

The tribe is named after Levi, one of the

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twelve sons of Jacob. The Levites' principal roles in the Temple included singing Psalms during Temple services, performing construction and maintenance for the Temple, serving as guards, and performing other services. In other words, **they took care of the church!**

We invite you to join us as modern day Levites and help us with spring cleaning. We want the church to look great as we have some important groups coming to visit in May (Hillsborough Associations on May 4<sup>th</sup>, Confirmation on May 18<sup>th</sup>)

Hamburgers and Hot Dogs will be served!

## **COMMUNITY NOTES**

The New Greeley Singers invite you to their Spring Concert, to be held at the First Congregational Church on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 at 7 PM. Free to All!

Special Guests ~ The Pelham Memorial School Chorus

Donations will be accepted and a contribution will be made to the Sherburne Hall Fund.

Reception following with refreshments provided by the Sherburne Hall Committee.